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ABSTRACT

Collaboration between bilingual education and regular classroom teachers, drawing on research and experience in special education. Several models for consultation used in special education are outlined: process consultation, used to help the teacher clarify student needs and develop solutions through a prescribed set of activities; the doctor-patient model, which is largely prescriptive; and the "purchase" model, in which service to the children are bought. Factors in the consulting relationship are discussed, including resistance, listening and communication skills, shared responsibility, content knowledge needs, and pre-referral intervention. These principles of consultation are then applied to bilingual and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) education as provided in pullout programs, focusing on the benefits of consultation and the special considerations inherent in bilingual and ESL instruction. One such program in an elementary school is described, and its characteristics illustrated in one interdisciplinary instructional unit. It is concluded that consultation programs offer benefits to both students and teachers, particularly when language and content area instruction are integrated. (MSE)

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CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION: ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS WORKING TOGETHER

Rita van Loenen
Perry Kay Haley

Abstract

The number of students with a primary home language other than English who are in need of specialized instructional services is on the rise. However, relatively few regular education teachers are prepared to teach this increasing number of second language learners.

This article reviews the literature on consultation and collaboration as it relates to special education. Consultative models have been effectively employed in special education for a number of years. Application of consultative methods to BLE/ESL programs is suggested and benefits for teachers and students are discussed. Information on a Bilingual and ESL program that currently uses a collaborative model is presented.

Introduction

The number of students with a primary language other than English who are in need of specialized instructional services is on the rise (Hamayan, 1990). Many mainstream teachers have accepted the challenge of working with social, intellectual, and cultural differences and abilities. However, relatively few teachers are prepared to teach second language children along with native English-speaking children (Faltis, 1993). Students who are learning English as a second language in either a bilingual or ESL setting need a variety of opportunities for communication which is authentic. The mainstream classroom provides opportunities for authentic communication and interaction with native English speakers in a variety of circumstances.

The integration of Collaborative/Consultative models affords regular classroom teachers who do not have specialized training in the area of second language acquisition the opportunity to work with bilingual teachers or ESL teachers who have been specially trained in strategies that assist in second language acquisition.

Collaboration/Consultation in Special Education

Special education employs several service delivery models to serve students with mild handicapping conditions. An effective service delivery model is resource consultation in which resource teachers spend part of their day giving direct service to identified students and some portion (20% plus) to consultation with regular classroom teachers (Graden, Casey & Christenson, 1985). The intent of this model is to reduce "pull outs" of students from the mainstream and to increase skills of regular classroom teachers so they can work more effectively with placed students in their classroom (Gersten, 1990; Huefner, 1988). In fact,

it appears that in many cases the best placement for effective educational and psychological interventions is in the regular classroom (Brown, Wyne, & Blackburn, 1979).

The impact of Public Law 94-142 which has referenced the regular classroom as the least restrictive environment has increased the need for collaboration. The consultative model is also consonant with the federal government's Regular Education Initiative (Huefner, 1988).

There are many benefits to a consultative approach. Through teacher consultation, classroom behavior improves (Engelhardt, Sulzer & Alterpruse, 1971). Teacher consultation has positive effects on academic performance (Randolph & Saba, 1973) and teachers' attitudes toward students with behavior problems (Palmo & Kuzaiar, 1972).

Neel (1981) describes three consultation models. The preferred model of "process consultation" seeks to assist classroom teachers in clarifying student needs and to develop solutions through a prescribed set of activities presented by the consultant. This model is in contrast to the less effective "doctor-patient" model in which the consultant diagnoses problems and prescribes solutions; if the prescription doesn't work, the consultant has full responsibility to find a new intervention. In the "purchase model", the classroom teacher "buys" resource services, usually direct services to children, that are needed to solve problems. The purchase model alleviates short term problems but does little for long-term solutions. It is important for the teacher consultant to be involved in "process consultation" so that the consultant can assist teachers in the process of identifying problems and developing solutions.

Dealing with Resistance and Gaining Support

Due to our recent educational history of referring students with special education needs and providing direct services in self-contained and resource classrooms, there are indicators that teachers may be reluctant to join in collaborative, classroom-based efforts to serve students with special needs (Friend & Bauwens, 1988; Idol-Maestas & Ritter, 1985; Brown, et al., 1979). Therefore, consulting teachers must be prepared to identify and deal with some possible resistance to the consultation process.

Gaining support begins with the administration at district and local school levels. In service training of regular education staff and administrators is a prerequisite to initiation of a consultative model. At the local school level, resistance to consultation must be considered both an individual and a group phenomenon. Resistance is reduced through an atmosphere of mutual trust, acceptance, and confidence. Interpersonal contact and communication with the whole staff is important. Teacher leaders are key staff members to begin consultative processes because many teachers will follow their acceptance or rejection of consultation. Ways to develop acceptance include demonstration of worth of strategies presented by the consultant and recognition of regular classroom teachers who have developed effective programs through consultation (newsletters, notes, principal's recognition at staff meetings or through daily contacts). Credit is always given to regular classroom teachers, not to the consultant (Brown, et al., 1979).

Listening and Communication Skills

Basic to a consulting relationship is the ability to strategize skills, question, listen and communicate (Huefner, 1988). The two parties should be equal and consultation should be viewed as a mutual, reciprocal form of communication (Pugach & Johnson, 1988). All of the personnel involved in the collaborative process are considered equals within their areas of expertise, yet each person involved can develop new skills for working with second language learners (Fradd, 1992).

Developing and Monitoring a Shared Educational Plan

Consultation, although in a broad sense ongoing, is short term and definitive when dealing with a particular student's needs. An educational action plan is required which involves shared responsibility by all parties. This plan includes strategies to be used, person(s) responsible, beginning and ending dates. Important features of this process are: agreement on roles, description of situations/needs/resources, data confirmation, prioritization of steps, development of goal statements and specification of objectives for both teachers and students.

The next step is implementation of program change. This process includes collaborate brainstorming by all teachers to generate possible interventions. Selected interventions are used to develop a plan of action. Critical aspects of program implementation are monitoring and adjusting. Frequent evaluation of the intervention plan, adjusting existing interventions, and implementing additional interventions from the plan increase intensity.

Generalization of the intervention plan in the regular classroom means that the classroom teacher will be able to use these strategies across multiple subject areas.

Content Knowledge

Consultants must be aware of learning styles, instructional interventions, behavioral strategies, and the curriculum of the district. Regular education curriculum is often adapted for children placed in special programs. Knowledge of language learning theory adds to the credibility of the consultant.

Prereferral

A prereferral intervention system reflects a trend toward indirect service (Graden, Casey & Christenson, 1985 a, b). The goal of the prereferral intervention model is to implement systematic intervention strategies in regular classrooms and to evaluate effectiveness of these interventions before a student is referred.

This collaborative process can reduce the number of students referred for direct services. Large numbers of students are exhibiting academic and behavioral difficulties in school and special education is being used to serve increasing numbers of these students each year (Algozzine, Ysseldyke, & Christenson, 1983). It is questionable whether special education can and should serve all students with learning and behavior problems under the direct services umbrella.

Application to the BLE/ESL pullout program

To understand the application of consultation to ESL pullout programs, one must understand the theory of language acquisition. Pullout programs for the purpose of second language acquisition have minimal effect since language instruction occurs in the "out of classroom" setting rather than in the authentic mainstream classrooms. In ESL pullout programs, second language students leave their mainstream classes at certain times during the day to receive structured ESL instruction in a separate classroom (Richard-Amato & Snow, 1988). Instruction lasts from 15 to 50 minutes each day (Faltis, 1993). Snow, Met, & Genesee (1992) suggest that a rationale behind integrating language and content teaching is that language is learned most effectively for communication in meaningful, purposeful social and academic contexts. Therefore, the mainstream classroom offers the greatest opportunity for meaningful and effective communication for second language students. The pull-out setting, because of the time constraints and lack of English language role models, is not the most ideal setting for those students trying to acquire a second language. Practice and application of learning from the pullout program do not always generalize to the regular classroom settings. This is because teachers traditionally do not tend to collaborate nor consult with one another across grade levels or disciplines. Students learning a second language need a natural setting with a purpose for authentic communication and good models of English which is the regular classroom. This validates the need for consultation/collaboration in order to achieve maximum language learning opportunities.

BLE/ESL pullout programs serve students in a delivery model similar to special education resource programs. When second language students spend the majority of their school time in regular classrooms, it makes sense to use ESL teachers as consultants. Their knowledge of second language learning can be used to develop effective programs for rapid language acquisition in the regular classroom. For example, in Arizona endorsed BLE/ESL teachers have a minimum of 21 course hours in specific BLE/ESL methods and many have years of experience working with second language students. BLE/ESL teachers can also provide information on cultural backgrounds of these students which promotes understanding and acceptance of language minority students.

Benefits

There would be many benefits to introducing the consultative model to BLE/ESL programs. Presently there is an over representation of minority students in special education programs (Rechly, 1988). Consultation using a prereferral model would reduce the number of inappropriate placements since interventions would be implemented in regular classrooms and fewer students would be referred to special education. Classroom teachers would learn additional strategies to work with LEP students. This increased knowledge would benefit students currently in the class as well as future LEP students.

Through increased communication between BLE/ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers, there would be a reduction of student program fragmentation and more integrated instructional plans for LEP students. Parent communication would be enhanced due to closer staff working relationships. The action plan could be the basis of effective parent conferences.

In summary, it appears feasible and expedient to introduce the consultative model to BLE/ESL programs. Benefits include increased effectiveness of programming for LEP students, better parent communication, reduction of inappropriate referrals to special education, and increased communication between special area and regular education teachers.

The Consultative Model in Practice

Beginning with the 1992 school year, several school sites within a rural/urban school district in the southwestern United States began to implement various ESL and bilingual consultative models according to the needs of students and size of programs. A consultative model was implemented at all seventeen schools. One elementary school chose to continue with a delivery model that included an ESL program for Kindergarten through sixth grade while operating a transitional bilingual education program for kindergarten through fifth grade. Parents in this school setting were given the option of enrolling their children in a designated bilingual classroom or in an all English classroom with ESL support.

The ESL/BLE consultative model became more focused when a team of teachers from elementary and secondary schools came together in the fall to design an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for LEP students who were enrolled in the district's ESL or bilingual programs. The IEP format was designed to align with the district criterion reference tests at each grade level in the areas of Reading and Writing. One junior high faculty also developed a Math IEP for their transitional ESL students.

The development of the IEP allowed classroom teachers, principals, counselors, bilingual teachers and ESL specialists to regularly review the progress of transitional bilingual and ESL students within the mainstream classroom. It also focused the regular classroom teacher on the delivery of services to students who were limited English proficient. It allowed them opportunities to examine their delivery of lessons and explore how that delivery might be enhanced through the use of strategies and materials that were better suited to students who were being transitioned into an all English course of study. It also afforded them opportunities to collaborate on a regular basis with an ESL specialist or bilingual teacher who worked with the students in a variety of educational settings. The ESL specialist was able to work with students in the Computer Assisted Instruction lab, the regular classroom, bilingual classroom and in a tutorial situation both during and after school. The ESL specialist's schedule allowed time to work with regular classroom teachers during regularly scheduled class time. Both the ESL specialist and bilingual teachers could assist the classroom teacher with lesson presentation, preparation of appropriate materials and individualized student assistance. The ESL specialist and certified bilingual teachers were available for consultation on instructional interventions, behavioral strategies, and district curriculum. This in-class consultation allowed ESL students and those students being transitioned from the bilingual classrooms to remain in mainstream classrooms which maximized language learning and provided natural models .

The integration of language and content area instruction requires that ESL teachers and bilingual teachers collaborate with mainstream content area teachers.

> Such collaboration requires a reciprocal relationship between instructors. Thus, the language instructor may consult with the classroom teacher about what is being taught, with particular attention given to content that has specific or special language requirements. The language instructor is then able to incorporate into language instruction meaningful and important content that has evident language-related value in the rest of the curriculum. (Snow, Met, Genesee, 1989).

This type of collaboration also gives ESL specialists and bilingual teachers an opportunity to model desired teaching strategies and promotes understanding and acceptance of the special needs that language minority students bring to a mainstream classroom.

The San Marcos Model

In the 1987-88 school year, San Marcos Elementary School in Chandler, Arizona began a school restructuring project that included an Outcome Based curriculum format and the integration of all special programs. The focus of this restructuring project was to allow opportunities for teachers to collaborate with grade level teams, cross grade level teams, and special area teachers to provide greater opportunities for all students to become successful in school. In to support the philosophy of "Together We Succeed," faculty and staff focused on the employment of an interdisciplinary collaborative model for the delivery of services for special needs' populations. On a weekly basis, special area teachers met as a team to plan strategies and develop units for those students enrolled in the ESL program. Members of the team included the physical education teachers, media specialist, computer specialists, special education teachers, speech teacher, music teachers, counselors, classroom aides, Chapter 1 curriculum specialist, and ESL teacher. The team developed units of study that were designed to incorporate prescribed district ESL curriculum objectives. Each team member was responsible for contributing their expertise to the development of the units.

They were also available to consult with regular classroom teachers who were given a weekly summary of the lesson objectives and hints for incorporating the objectives into their prescribed grade level curriculum. Vocabulary lists were developed to accompany each unit so regular classroom teachers could use them for spelling words for their ESL students in the mainstream classroom. The idea behind this approach was that second language learners do much better in acquiring a second language when it makes sense, is categorically presented, and is repeated in many different formats.

An example of this collaborative effort was a unit that was developed on Spatial Relationships. The unit was first introduced in the ESL classroom. Literature was selected by the media specialist that would supplement the unit theme. Other media materials related to the theme were also selected and distributed to regular classroom teachers who had them available for their ESL stu-

dents. The physical education staff designed activities that reinforced the theme of spatial relations with activities such as obstacle courses that the children had to complete while the teachers verbally gave the directions. They also designed activities where the students followed written directions that were displayed on cones throughout the obstacle courses. Other activities involved games and activities that incorporated the theme of the unit.

The music teachers found songs that related to the theme and again incorporated opportunities for total physical response much like those that the physical education staff developed. The music activities gave the students a chance to hear the target vocabulary in yet another natural setting. The computer specialist developed activities for the computer lab that allowed for incorporation of the unit objectives. Special computer programs were selected and word lists were customized to allow for maximum exposure to both the spoken and written word. The special education teacher was able to target unit objectives within the special education classroom.

Many of the units were developed by interdisciplinary staff; this project encouraged participation of classroom teachers and special area teachers. This collaborative interdisciplinary approach to ESL allowed for a consultative relationship to develop between the regular classroom teachers and all special area teachers. Communication, responsive collaboration, increased effectiveness of programs for limited English proficient students, and reduction of inappropriate referrals were all positive outcomes of this approach. Students benefited through increased mastery of unit objectives, continuity of expectations, and a more focused effort to meet the individual needs of every student.

Conclusion

Consultative models offer a win-win situation. When teachers work together to provide language rich experiences, students and teachers alike benefit. Since content area teachers may be ill-prepared to "teach" language or even recognize student's language-learning needs because of a lack of training in language pedagogy, language teachers become pedagogical resources for mainstream teachers who are willing to assume some responsibility for treating students' language needs (Snow, et al., 1989, Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992). Over the past several years there has been a renewed interest in language education that integrates language and content instruction for second language learners (Hudelson, 1989). Language-across-the curriculum has been advocated for some time for native speakers of English (Anderson, Eisenberg, Holland, Weiner & Rivera-Kron, 1983).

This integrated approach to language teaching and content area instruction provides opportunities for collaboration between classroom teachers and ESL/BLE teachers. Cummins (1980, 1981) provided theoretical impetus for considering the integration of language and content instruction. Working cooperatively, the mainstream teacher and language teachers thus pinpoint the linguistic needs of the learner and plan jointly to meet these needs (Snow et al., 1989). These educators benefit from increased communication with specialists that results in a clearer focus on individual student needs. Classroom teachers benefit by increasing their skills and expertise so that they can more effectively work with second language learners who are placed in their classrooms.

Consultative models offer opportunities for development of an atmosphere of mutual trust, sharing, acceptance and confidence.

Students benefit from the increased communication between the special area teachers and regular education teachers. Collaboration provides a more coherent developmental program for second language students. There are fewer inappropriate referrals and placements to special education. Problems that arise are quickly addressed. Appropriate second language strategies are modeled and implemented to assist students in content area classes. Student learning is increased due to attention to individual needs and learning styles.

It is time to tear down the walls that have separated teachers for so long. Collaborative interdisciplinary models should be a major consideration for BLE/ESL programs of the 1990's. As the numbers of second language learners in our schools increase and resources decrease, the need for collaboration becomes more evident.

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